G-E *Campus News*

A NEW MOVIE STAR

Lightning, commonly considered a "bad actor," plays the leading role in a sound-motion picture just released. Contrary to expectations, he gives a good performance; in fact, some critics say he "electrifies" the audiences. The picture, "A Modern Zeus," was made to illustrate how the terrific force of lightning has been reproduced in the General Electric high-voltage laboratory in order that its effects may be studied and means devised to safeguard life and property against its attacks.

The film traces the common fear of vast electric discharges, from its earliest manifestations in mythology, down through the "lightning-rod era," and pictures the ravages wrought by freakish bolts. The studio, or laboratory, scenes show the discoveries of Edison and of Steinmetz, and the laboratory at the General Electric Works at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where artificial lightning discharges of up to 10,000,000 volts have been made. The charges leap across space, shattering blocks of wood and model buildings, and fusing sand into glass. The effects of lightning's striking models of the Chrysler and Empire State buildings in New York add to the spectacular nature of the picture. The laboratory where the actor was trained is directed by K. B. McEachron, Ohio Northern U., '13, M. S., Purdue, '20, and the picture was made by General Electric's cinematographer, John Gilmour, Union College, '27.

FREER WHEELING

For a stretch of 30 intersections along Michigan Avenue, Chicago, traffic speed has averaged only 13 mph. Chicago traffic engineers made a thorough 5-year study of the situation and designed a system of traffic control, based on the recommendations of several other nationally-known traffic experts, that is the most modern in the world. Here are some of its features: It is a progressive system that will practically double the present average speed of travel. Northbound traffic at certain intersections will be managed independently of southbound traffic. Flashing green signals will tell a driver whether he is going too fast or too slow to make a nonstop passage. A special controller will cut in to operate the lights at the Chicago River immediately after the bridge has closed, to allow waiting vehicles to clear. Even the previously neglected pedestrian will have a blue-white signal to guide him.

When the three Chicago municipal government bodies involved decided, last year, to install the system, it was found that General Electric traffic-control apparatus would meet all the unusual and complicated conditions. General Electric obtained the order, and the system is now being installed.

Ralph Reid, M.I.T., '24, was responsible for the design of the equipment, and C. H. Rex, Illinois, '26, G-E traffic-control specialist in Chicago, aided in the preparation of final plans.

ANTARCTIC AIR MAIL

In Schenectady, N. Y., there is a mailman who has, without a doubt, the longest route in the world. Every two weeks he delivers letters and postcards to eager recipients about 10,000 miles away—yet every one arrives on time. These letters go by air mail in the truest sense of the word, because they are broadcast by the General Electric short-wave station, W2XAF. Their destination is the camp of the Byrd Antarctic Expedition in Little America. Mailman K. G. Patrick, U. of Michigan, '29, of the Company's Publicity Department, occasionally gets some unusual requests. Once, a youthful balloonist wanted to send an aërial picture of himself to Admiral Byrd, but the mailman had to compromise by describing it. Letters come from all over the world, and about half of them wind up with a request for a penguin.

This air mail goes through regularly and quite clearly, thanks to a special directive antenna designed by Dr. E. F. W. Alexanderson, Kungliga Tekniska Hogskolan, Stockholm, Sweden, 1900, a G-E consulting engineer. For the benefit of short-wave radio enthusiasts: this antenna is of the horizontal checkerboard type, especially adapted to sending horizontally polarized radiations. The effectiveness and carrying power of these radiations were discovered by Dr. Alexanderson in 1924. Incidentally, W2XAF operates on a wave-length of 31.48 meters, or 9,530 kilocycles, and these programs are broadcast every other Sunday night, starting at 11 o'clock, E.S.T.

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GENERAL ELECTRIC